

Kids in Monument Park

Anyone who has walked past Monument Park lately, read the local papers, or heard the local TV news, knows that teens like to hang out in the park and that some adults want to put a stop to it. A group known as the “Take Back the Park Committee” wants the police to enforce a non-loitering law that’s hardly ever enforced to keep teens from gathering in Monument Park in the evenings. I would like to explain why **we should be allowed to stay.**

Teens need a safe place to hang out. The October 16 *Press Herald* reported that teens who have no place to gather safely tend to cause trouble by drinking, getting into fights, and joining gangs.

Parents like knowing exactly where their kids are, and this is the case when we are at the park. In fact, parents can (and do!) drive by and quietly make sure that their kids are not drinking or causing trouble. **The police patrol the park, so our parents know that our activities are safe as well as fun.**

In addition, the park is a public place that is maintained by tax dollars. **It is not fair to limit the use of this public space to some groups and not others.** Apparently, some people think that just because many teens don’t pay taxes, that we don’t have rights. However, **we will grow up and become gainfully employed, tax-paying citizens before long.** Shouldn’t we be able to use the public space we will shortly be paying to maintain? **Furthermore, our parents do pay taxes.** They should be able to let their children use a space that they are paying to maintain.

Finally, **the non-loitering law, when applied to a park, doesn’t make sense. “Loitering,” according to Webster’s dictionary, means “to remain in an area for no obvious reason.”** But what is the purpose of a park, if not to gather, talk, and meet friends? The non-loitering law, then, should apply equally to anyone sitting on a park bench with no clear activity other than enjoying nature.

The “Take Back the Park Committee” believes that teens who gather in the park pose a danger to the city. We are not there to cause trouble. We get together to talk, share ideas, and enjoy one another’s company. **The “Take Back the Park Committee” can’t find a single instance of our bothering anyone or doing anything dangerous.**

Since we aren’t causing trouble, our parents know where we are, the park is a public place, and the non-loitering law doesn’t make sense in this context, then kids should be allowed in Monument Park. So if you’re an adult, don’t support the “Take Back the Park Committee,” and if you’re a kid, come to the park for some good, clean fun.

claim is clearly stated in the introduction

reason supports the claim that kids should be allowed to stay

evidence supports reason

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reason supports claim that kids should be allowed to stay

evidence supports reason

counterargument is stated

response to counterargument

conclusion summarizes reasons; includes a call to action